

OF THE

WISDOM & LORD,

CONCERNING

Enthufiasm.

*In a Letter to a Gentleman*

*Written in Rallery,  
at his Good Honour.*

LONDON,

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at the Bell in St. Pauls Church-yard.

1703.

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## REMARKS

UPON THE

LETTER to a LORD, &amp;c.

SIR,

I Thank you for giving me the first sight of the *Letter to a Lord* concerning *Enthusiasm*, of which I had heard some Talk, with a Character not greatly in its favour. And particularly, that a my design appears in it of setting the Prophets and Inspir'd Writers of the Old and New Testaments on a level with

the Pretenders to Inspiration, who have of late made such a Noise among us: which is, I need not tell you, making them Brainfick *Enthusiasts*, or deservers of a much worse Character.

But, Sir, I was in so Good Humour, (this Gentleman's Fondling Word) or, if you please, in so dull a one, as not to be very much aware of any thing worse, than a sort of diverting Wit, pretending only to *Amusement* (as he pretends in the beginning) till after I had run over several Leaves. But, at length, I was not able to forbear concluding, that *that* Censure, as sowrely as it looks, is not at all owing to a *sowre Humour*. This, I shall shew, is no *rash* Conclusion, or I am much mistaken.

But, in the mean time, I ask you, Sir, in *what* Humour you think this Gentleman was, in his *ninth* and

*tenth*

tenth Pages? Into which he was  
 pleased to hale, by Head and Shoul-  
 ders, a Prelate, whose Name he  
 modestly conceal'd, as a Believer in  
 Fairys. Were it needful, faith he,  
 I could put your Lordship in mind of  
 an Eminent, Learned, and truly Chri-  
 stian Prelate, you once knew, who  
 could have given you a full Account  
 of his Belief in Fairys. But we  
 Christians, who have such ample  
 Faith ourselves, will allow nothing to  
 poor Heathens, &c. But if a Reverend  
 Christian Prelate may be so great a  
 Volunteer in Faith, as beyond the or-  
 dinary prescription of the Catholick  
 Church, to believe in Fairys, why may  
 not an Heathen Poet, in the ordinary  
 way of his Religion, be allowed to  
 believe in Muses? For these, your  
 Lordship knows, were so many Divine  
 Persons in the Heathen Creed, &c.



I should now say, would Good  
 Humour allow of it, What Stuff is  
 this! What Stuff, to fall from the  
 Pen of a Gentleman who abounds  
 both in Sense and Good Humour.  
 Was it intended for *sheer Wit*, in  
 troth 'tis admirable. And a rare  
 thing it is (if a common Observa-  
 tion has any truth in it) for Great  
 Masters of Reason and Judgment to  
 have the Witty Talent too.  
 Was it intended for a *Chastisement*  
 of the Prelate, for some Affront or  
 other he had put upon this Gentle-  
 man, or any of his dear Friends?  
 Oh! 'tis a cruel one in the dark.  
 But since no Name accompanies his  
 gallant Description of him, it may  
 be he intended to expose *Prelacy*,  
 rather than a *Prelate*.  
 Were it worth the while, one  
 might ask what this Gentleman  
 means by his Prelate's Belief in  
*Fairys*. Doth he mean Belief in  
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*Fairys themselves, or in Stories that are told of them? To think he means this latter, is to think, that a Man happy at Eloquence, may sometimes not know how to speak: For what sense is there in saying, That such a Man believes in such a Story. But the Context speaks his charging the Prelate with believing in *Fairys themselves*, and therefore clears the Gentleman from not speaking Sense. But, indeed, were there truth in his Charge, understand it as you please, he needs not be much concern'd about his wording of it. For he tells his Lord, not long before, that Truth is the most powerful thing in the World, since even Fiction itself must be governed by it. And, by the way, what a great Notion is this, which he also makes the Lord to be so fond of, as often to make it his Reflection on many occasions (tho' I fancy*

either the *often* or the *many* he might have spared) *Truth is the most powerful thing in the World, &c.* This our Gentleman can vouchsafe to make an Article of his Faith, because not a Doctrin of an Inspir'd *Enthusiast*. 'Tis an *Apocrypha-Doctrin*, but he waves all the great Reasons given there, why Truth must be the most powerful thing; and puts in their place a most notable Discovery of his own, or his Lord, viz. That even *Fiction itself must be govern'd by it, and can only please by its resemblance*. Or, all Fictions will be *despis'd*, whose Makers want the Wit to paint them a little like to Truth. And for *this* Reason Truth must necessarily be the most powerful thing in the World: Tho' my dulness can apprehend no such necessity, but thinks it enough of all Conscience, that Truth must therefore be more powerful than *Fiction*, And with



me 'tis an infallible Great Truth,  
that what *overpowers* another thing,  
must be the more powerful of the  
two.

But I must not yet have done  
with him about his *Prelate*: For it  
comes in my Mind to ask him, how  
he can reconcile his Belief in *Fairys*,  
as the Heathen Poets believ'd in their  
*Muses*, with his being not only an  
*Eminent* and *Learned*, but also a  
*truly Christian* Prelate. His true  
Christianity, it seems, will allow  
him to believe in a Company of  
*little Devils*, tho' it forbids him to  
believe in any more than *one God*.

But, after all, in sober sadness,  
*word* it how he will, and make it as  
little pertinent as he pleases to his  
present purpose, 'tis my *Good Hu-*  
*mour'd* Opinion, that he *must* mean  
no worse in charging the Prelate  
with Believing in *Fairys*, than that  
he believeth Old Wives Tales of  
them.

them. But then he may look to be ask'd, how he *knows* he believes them. Did he ever tell him so? He tells his Lord, that this truly Christian Prelate could have given his Lordship an Account, nay, and a full Account of his Belief in them. He could have done it, but did he ever do it? If he had done it to himself, or his Lordship, why was this made a Secret? You may say, to be sure he had it at least from some second Hand. But I am not sure of this. 'Tis possible he might, and 'tis possible he might not; and he might have had a Lye too at some second hand; and he may think it as well becoming a Wise Man to be over-credulous, where a Lye may do a special piece of Service, as *some* he is, I presume, no Stranger to, will have the other *extream* to be, where a dear Interest is deeply in the Case.

And

And thus, Sir, have I presented you with a little Specimen, of what Work may easily be made by a Man, who has nothing else to do, with not a few of this Gentleman's choice Lines.

I shall take no further notice of any thing before the 14th Page, than that it is a Bantering of Inspiration, without making the least Offer at Arguing about the Matter, or distinguishing in the Case. Indeed, from first to last, 'tis, for the most part, a Run of Fancy, entertaining enough, were it better design'd; and few Plays perform this part better, of the few I have been acquainted with. And a great Performance, generally speaking, might it be, but for the foremention'd great Fault, which needs no extraordinary penetrating Faculty to espy at the bottom.

I have



I have no knowledge of the *Man*, more than that he has the perfect *Mien* of a Gentleman; and that I find in his Letter a great deal of very Manly Sense: Not only neat clever Turns, but noble Thoughts, expressed in as vigorous as proper Words: Very useful Speculations; were they made use of for their proper purposes: So that you may conclude, this Gentleman is able (would he list to employ his Parts that way) to establish Mens Belief of the most important Points, on the most rational Grounds, as to unsettle and unhinge their Faith, and ruffle their Minds, and Advance wanton *Scepticism*; which naturally, at last, centers in downright perfect *Infidelity*.

Now I proceed to give the best Account I can of what follows, and with as much brevity as you can well desire: Reflecting here and there

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there on a Paragraph or Sentence, which deserves most notice.

In that 14th Page he falls upon extolling the Age we live in, for the liberty given in it, to *Inspect most sharply, and Ridicule most wittily Folly and Extravagance of every kind; and for giving Imposture no Privilege; so that neither the Credit of a Court, the Power of a Nobility, nor the Awfulness of a Church, can give Her Protection; or hinder Her from being Arraigned in every Shape and Appearance.*

Here is the Elixir, the very *Quintessence of Good Humour*, which will not suffer the Mixture of one *lowre* drop. There's not a *Dram*, it seems, of Dross in this Golden Age. It gives as much liberty as Heart can wish, to Expose and Ridicule Folly and Extravagance; but if it gives *any* to play the Buffoons upon *Wisdom* too, and such Wisdom

as

as cannot away with the least Extravagance, Good Humour will by no means endure one syllable of *this*: Tho' never was an Age more Infamous than the *Present* for so exorbitant a Liberty; I was about to say, nor *so* Infamous.

*This* Age is so impartial in the Ridiculing of all Impostures, that neither the *Court*, nor the *Nobility*, nor the *Church*, can protect any one Imposture whatsoever; but if neither *Religion*, nor *Virtue*, no nor *Reason* itself, can have a greater Protection from Ridicule than Imposture, *this* must be suppressed; Good Humour must not touch upon *this* String. But now I think better of it, I might have left Religion out of those *three*, (Revealed at least) except *Priestcraft* may happen to be no Imposture.

But, in very good earnest, whosoever shall set himself to paint  
this



this blessed Liberty to the Life, he would, had he the Wit of *this* Gentleman, make this Age infinitely more deformed, than any Pencil can make it beautiful: Tho' I can, I confess, have no huge Opinion of *his* Wit, who knows, as well as *any* Man what to *say*, but is as far from knowing what *not* to say.

If you plead in his behalf, that he is not so *unwary* in applauding this Liberty as I would make him: For he ingenuously confesses, that *it may seem to run too far*; and *we may be said to make ill use of it*. And are not *these* good Cautious Strokes?

I answer, If they are, 'tis in favour of this Liberty. He saith, it *may seem to run too far*, not that it *may do so*: And we may be *said to make ill use of it*, not that possibly (and much less probably) an ill use *may be made of it*. And I  
sup-

suppose he had the wise Religious  
*Enthusiasts* in his Eye, as those to  
 whom this Liberty may seem to run  
 too far; and who may be apt to say,  
 that ill use may be made of it. And  
 what doth he say to satisfy them,  
 that this Liberty cannot run so far  
 as that ill use may be made of it?  
 'Tis just as much as satisfies me,  
 that he has a Talent at saying any  
 thing; at saying *omne dicibile*, whe-  
 ther it be *dicendum* or not. And  
 if we do say of this Liberty, what  
 we may say, he useth us worse  
 than *Babies*; doth not give us sub-  
 stantial *Sugar-Plums*, but *Whipt-  
 Cream*, to stop our Mouths. This  
 is it, but *Who shall be judge?* What  
 Remedy shall we prescribe to this in  
 general? Can there be a better than  
 from that Liberty itself which is com-  
 plained of? If Men reason ill, it is  
 Reason still must teach them to do  
 better; Justness of Thought and Stile,  
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*refinement in Manners, good Breeding and Politeness of every kind, can come only from the Tryal and Experience of what is best ; let but the search go freely on, and the right Measure of every thing will soon be found. Whatever Humour has got the start, if it be unnatural it cannot hold. And the Ridicule, if ill placed at first, will fall at last where it deserves.*

It is worth trying whether this curious piece of Work may be taken to pieces without spoiling. But *who shall be judge?* that is, Whether Liberty may be denied to the Ridiculing of every thing. I answer, If we are to seek for Judges in *Great-Britain, &c.* we may find enough in *Peru, &c.* the *Incas* and their People, and less judicious Folk than *they* too, are wise enough to judge, *first*, Whether there be any such things as *Sacred* ; *Secondly*, If there be, Whether it

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be a decent or *innocent* thing to  
Ridicule them.

*What Remedy shall we prescribe  
to this in general?* 'Tis no matter  
what, in general, if any particular  
Remedy may be found out.

*Can there be a better, than from that  
Liberty itself which is complain'd of.*  
Yes, there can, and a much better.

*If Men reason ill, it is Reason still  
must teach them to do better.* What  
even *those* who have no Reason to  
teach them, or, if they have any,  
will not be taught by it? Reason  
*must* teach them; but if she *can't*,  
must she be obliged to an Impossi-  
bility? What usage is *this*, of poor  
Reason!

*Justness of Thought and Stile, Re-  
finement in Manners, good Breeding  
(and why Good Humour left out?)  
and politeness of every kind, can come  
onely from the Trial of what is Best.*  
But who shall be judge of what is Best?

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And what will become of those who can't or won't make this Trial? What Experience have *they* of what is best?

*Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing will soon be found.* But I need not ask again, what must become of *those* who cannot search, or *will* not, if they can, tho' no body forbids them? *Whatever Humour has got the start, if it be unnatural, it cannot hold, &c.* Excellent good again! But *where* does he live to observe, that *unnatural things cannot hold*? I am sure, where I live I observe nothing more than that they *can* and *do*: And that some of the most unnatural things are so far from not holding, that they grow still, and increase, and propagate mightily, when they are let alone, and have all the liberty their good Friends would have allowed them.

He goes on to say every whit as fine things, pag. 16, &c. But 'tis no great pleasure to be a great Transcriber; and therefore I will give you but a taste of them.

*I have often wondred, saith he, to see Men of Sense so mightily Alarm'd at the approach of any thing like Ridicule on certain Subjects, as if they mistrusted their own Judgments.* Now, if he means by *certain* Subjects, *sacred* ones, if those Men of *sense* have as much *Religion*, how can they forbear being much concern'd at their being Ridicul'd, both from the *reverence* they have for those things, and from their mistrust of the Judgments of Men of *less* Sense, tho' they have not the least suspicion of *their own* Judgments? And is it a matter of *wonder* that they should be much alarm'd at the approach of Ridicule on *some* Subjects, except there were

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*none* a Ridicule on which can have  
 an untoward Influence on *those* Peo-  
 ple? And he *thus* goes on; *For what*  
*Ridicule can lie against Reason?* As  
 if all were to be presumed Able  
 Judges of what is Reason, of what  
 has *more* than an Appearance of  
 Reason. Or *can any one of the least*  
*justness of Thought endure a Ridicule*  
*wrong placed, &c.* But if there be  
 any Men of but *little Sense* to be  
 found, may not *these* be suspected  
 of as little *justness of Thought*, and  
 therefore of no mighty Ability to  
 understand when a Ridicule may be  
 wrong or right placed? This *himself*  
 is aware may be matter of Suspici-  
 on; for he adds, that *the Vulgar in-*  
*deed may swallow any sordid Jest,*  
*any meer foolery or buffoonery, &c.*  
 May they so? And are the *Vulgar* such  
 sorry Wretches that 'tis not worth  
 while to take any Care of them;  
 or to be watchful against their swal-

lowing *sordid Fests*, unless they were more wholesome, by letting them have (if possible) *none* to swallow? And for what *reason* should such things as *sordid Fests* have such an uncontrol'd Liberty, since all Men of *sense* will extreamly nauseate them, and onely Men of *no* sense can be pleas'd with them? Next comes an Objection against that Liberty, with its Answer, such as it is, *viz.*

O! *say we, the Subjects are too grave* (and here he makes a Chasm; but what Thought might fill it up, I will not ask him.) He answers, *Perhaps so, but let us see first whether they are really grave or no; for in the manner we may conceive them, they may, peradventure, be very grave and weighty in our Imaginations, but very ridiculous and impertinent in their own nature, &c.* What so in the Imaginations of *us Men of sense?*

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*We can never be too grave, if we are sure the thing is grave as we apprehend it. The main point (or the greatest difficulty) is to know always true Gravity from the false, &c.* But what a disparagement is it to good sense, not to be able, with the greatest ease, to discern the difference between things very Grave and Weighty, and things very Ridiculous and Impertinent!

But I cannot easily give myself leave to be very Grave upon *such* Trifling, as I remember not when I have met with the like. And the rest being all of a Piece, I will not *trifle* so myself as to follow him thorow this long Paragraph, nor the strange Rambles of the next following Leaves.

He shews a very great disgust at the two opposite things *Imposture* and *Enthusiasm*; and, to give him his due, himself cannot be charge-



able with the one or the other : For he lays himself too open to deserve the Name of an *Impostor*, and has not a Zeal for any Mode of Religion warm enough to be suspected of *Enthusiasm* : I mean, you may be sure, *that* of the *Religious* kind ; for he reckons up I know not how many *other* kinds of it, as we shall see hereafter.

This Gentleman playing here, in his extraordinary way, the Great Champion for Liberty, and shewing himself so enamour'd with her, as not to endure her being restrain'd so much as to the ridiculing of the very gravest things, I will onely ask him, whether a Man of *his* sense can be able not to distinguish between *Liberty* and *Licentiousness* ; between Liberty of *Opinion* (or *Conscience*) and an unlimited Liberty of *Practice* : And whether he who understands no difference between these *two*,  
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ought not to live *alone*, or is *fit* to be a Member of any Society. But as such Ignorance as *this* cannot be, in the least, imagined of *such* a Person, so 'tis as difficult to conceive, how he could *forbear* mentioning and making use of this distinction; but, Hand over Head, run on with his Rhetorick against the checking of Liberty, without *intimating*, that some certain Bounds are necessary to be set to it.

I cannot ask him over *seriously*, whether it be in his *Power* to think, that the free Ridiculing of the most essential Principles of Religion, such as the *Existence of God*, a *Life to come*, and the *Eternal Reasons of Moral Good and Evil*, be not an effectual means to make Religion in general despised; and so to give such a loose to *Conscience*, as to make it not boggle at the breach of solemn Oaths, the strongest Ligaments

ments of Civil Society ; and the incomparably best Security of true *Liberty* and *Property* from being invaded and overthrown.

Sir, You could not but carry such things as these in your Mind, as you read what I now reflected on, and past over ; and therefore need not my telling you, that nothing can be more slightly said in the defence of this Liberty. And that one Bristle of a Brush can wipe off at a Stroke such Colours as these he has laid upon it ; if they do not vanish in a Moment of *themselves*.

But your Good Humour may suggest, that surely this Gentleman was far from being in *earnest* in any thing of this ; he onely has made a Trial of what *Wit* may do, and how plausibly monstrous Absurdities may be set off. He has done but like *Zeno*, when he plaid the Sophistical Wag against the possibility

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sibility of the thing call'd *Motion*.  
 And that I mayn't come short of  
 you in Good Humour, I will say  
 you may be in the right; but then  
 I must add too, that I can't admire  
*his* knack at *Sophistry*, but find *he*  
 is *here* a very *Bungler*, as marvellous  
 an *Artist* as he is at as great Matters.  
 Yet his *Courage* is very wonderful  
 to *those* who have Wit enough to  
 be sensible, how dangerous it is to  
*Jest* with such *keen-edg'd* Tools.

For a good many Pages after the  
 21st, we meet with very notable  
 high Flights against *Persecution* upon  
 the score of Religion. And I wish  
 I had *his* Pen to tell you my  
 Thoughts of them. Yet take from  
 my *own*, such a one as it is, what  
 follows, *viz.* That I feel myself in  
 so *Good a Humour*, as not onely  
 disables me to give them one angry  
 Cast, but makes me not a little  
 pleased with the Eloquence and Wit  
 he

he has shewed *here*. Let the Old Gentleman at *Rome*, and *Lewis le Grand*, with their Flaming Crew, make a damned Heretick of this Gentleman for *this* Satyr, he shall have *my* Absolution, (as good a one as I can give) and great *Thanks* into the Bargain. Nothing could so reconcile me to the *Inquisitions*, as seeing them well fill'd with their *Friends*, and the Doors as well bolted and barr'd upon them, till their Orthodoxy will allow them to have a good Opinion of *Good Nature*; and their *Christianity* be well reconciled to *Humanity*. If ever I could be so Bigotted to my own Religious Sentiments, as to hate other Folks that differ from mine, while I am ignorant of what is to be said for them, I should be in danger of hating the Religion of all Persecutors, (however dignifi'd or distinguish'd) without any other Reason, but be-

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cause 'tis *theirs*: And of concluding all those *Modes* of Religion arrant *Priestcraft*, in which the Doctrine of *Persecution* is a *fundamental* Article; and that cannot be propagated nor defended but by *Club-Law*. And thus, Sir, you see how far I am from having any Dispute with our Gentleman upon *this* Argument.

And as far am I from taking the least Offence at a great part of what he delivers, with respect chiefly to the infinitely Noblest of all Arguments, the *Divine Nature*, beginning at *Page 35*. so far from *this*, that as the Eloquence thereof much pleases me; so I know the Matter is as *true* as *excellently well expressed*; bating his so frequent repetitions of his *darling* Word, and using it where some other might, I think, do better. I cannot forbear transcribing several of his Lines here.

Good



Good Humour, saith he, is not only the best Security against Enthusiasm, but the best Foundation of Piety and true Religion (the Sense of which I cannot Object against, if he had said a good, instead of the best Foundation) for if right Thoughts and worthy Apprehensions of the Supreme Being, are Fundamental to all true Worship and Adoration, 'tis more than probable, that we shall never miscarry in this respect, but through ill Humour only. Nothing but ill Humour, either natural or forced, can bring a Man to think that the World is governed by any devilish or malicious Power. I very much question, whether any thing besides ill Humour, can be the cause of Atheism; (I hope ill Humour here takes in Evil Affections) for there are so many Arguments to perswade a Man in Humour, that, in the main, all things are kindly and well dispos'd of, that one would think

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think it impossible for him to be so far out of conceit with Affairs, as to imagine that they all ran at Adventures, &c. This, however, I am perswaded of, that nothing but ill Humour can give us dreadful or ill Thoughts of a Supreme Manager. Nothing can perswade us of sullenness or sourness in such a Being, but the forefeeling of somewhat of this kind in ourselves; and if we are afraid of bringing Good Humour into Religion, or thinking with Freedom and Pleasantness on such a Subject as God, 'tis because we conceive the Subject so like ourselves, and can hardly have a Notion of Majesty and Greatness, without Stateliness and Moroseness accompanying it. This is, I doubt, too true an Account of it, as to many; but a very unhappy Education may be the Account of that wofully Superstitious Fear, as to not a few, who have nothing of State-

Stateliness or Moroseness in their Tempers.

Next he saith, *This, however, is the just Reverse of that Character, which we own to be most Divinely Good, when we see it in Men of Highest Power.* And quickly after he interposeth another most ingenious Harangue against Persecution, as perfectly contrary to the Divine Spirit of Love, and to Humanity; and as destructive to what is the pretended Design thereof. That instead of doing Religion any Service, it renders it *Tragical*. Then comes a great Encomium of Liberty in our Enquiries into the Principles of Religion; and a smart Invective against looking on God as a Being that will not endure *this*. And against those *who are afraid to use their Reason freely, even on that very Question, Whether there be a God or no; as Presumers of Him* bad,

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bad, and flatly contradicting his Character of Goodness, while they discover this mistrust of His Temper, and fear His Anger and Resentment in the case of this Freedom of Enquiry.

Now this Liberty of Enquiry I can no more condemn, than I can the Religion of us Protestants; it being (as Mr. Chillingworth has demonstrated) the very Foundation of Protestantism; and he has made it most evident, that tho' an ill use may be made of it, the restraining of this Liberty will be a Remedy much worse than the Disease.

But, after all, tho' I as heartily subscribe to what he saith of the Goodness of GOD, as I do to this Proposition, that *He is; Natural Religion* assuring us of nothing more, than that GOD is *Absolutely infinitely Good*, and as Good as Good can be; and *Revealed Religion* assuring us of the same; and that He is not only

a *Loving* Being, but *Love* itself; yet I must needs much blame him for his Description of the Divine Nature, as too *Partial* and imperfect; tho' most true, as far as it goeth.

A *Being absolutely Perfect* is that which is understood by the Word *GOD*, and He cannot therefore want any one Perfection, nor the highest degree possible of any one. But is Goodness *all* Perfections? Is not *Wisdom* a Perfection, and *Righteousness*, and *Purity*, or *Holiness*, to name no more? Goodness indeed is the *prime* Perfection, and that which so sets off the other, that they ought not to be called Perfections, without the Consideration of their being in Conjunction with Goodness. Or rather, 'tis Goodness which makes them what they are.

For what we call *Wisdom* is no *Wisdom* separated from Goodness;

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'tis Knavish Craft and Subtilty. What goes by the Name *Justice*, if it be void of all Goodness, ought to be stiled *Cruel Severity*: 'Tis *summum Jus*, and therefore *summa Injuria*. Even as *Power* without *Goodness* is a tyrannical thing, and consequently 'tis great Impotence; and so far from a Perfection, that 'tis the filthiest disparagement to him who hath it. The *Purity* of the Divine Nature is its perfect Antipathy to all *Moral Evil*, but 'tis a Contradiction to conceive *this* without Goodness, the greatest Goodness, in the most comprehensive sense of the Word.

Now, were the Divine Nature wholly constituted of Goodness, as he understands it for *Loving-kindness* only, since *GOD* is the *Supreme Manager*, as *his Word* is, but *Supreme Governour* is a much better, he must needs have enacted *Laws* against



against all kinds of *Immorality*, or where would be his *Purity* and *Holiness*? or his *Loving-kindness* either to his Intelligent Creatures; *Immorality* being destructive to them, with respect both to their Welfare in *this* and the *other* Life. And should He not have given his Laws the Sanction of *Penalties* for the Transgression of them, and see that they be executed as necessity requires, where would be his *Wisdom* as Governour? Laws without this Sanction being *no* Laws properly; and not executing them on wilful obdurate Offenders is to make Laws in *Jest*. And if GOD should make no discrimination betwixt the Observers and Transgressors of his Laws, but deal with them both alike, where would be his *Righteousness*, his *distributive Justice*?

And therefore the best of the *Pagan* Philosophers would not offer

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at maintaining, that *in the main all things are kindly and well disposed* (as the Gentleman's Words are) but upon the Supposition of a *Future* Judgment, whereby all will be set right, and all Objections answer'd, taken from constant Observation, that in *this* World *all things* commonly *come alike to all*, and the *vilest* Men prosper *here*, as if they were Rewarded for their Villanies; and the most *Virtuous* and Good Men as frequently are great *Sufferers*, as if they were punish'd for their Goodness.

I need give but a *hint* of these things to such a Person as I have now to do with. Considering how little of *Method* he observes in his Letter, and how Matters of a different Nature are mingled, and how he returns to the *same* again and again, when one would conclude he had done with them; I am fain to

imitate him in these Remarks, and *can't* avoid it, unless I could be at the pains to put his Letter into better Method for him, and place all his Paragraphs and Periods together, which are a kin to each other; but this would be no easy Task.

Now, after what I have remarked upon his imperfect Notion of the Divine Goodness, I think it proper to take notice of this Passage, *Pag. 57. viz. To love the Publick, to study universal Good, and to promote the Interest of the whole World, as far as is in our Power, is surely the height of Goodness, and makes that Temper which we call Divine.* This is excellently well said, but I say, that GOD would not study *universal* Good, nor promote the *whole* Interest of the whole World, if he had not as great a regard, at least, to the Spiritual and Eternal Interest of Men, as to their Bodily  
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and Temporal; and neither the *one* nor the other, would He concern Himself to promote, if He did not set Himself to discourage Vice, by severely treating the impenitently Vicious, and were *all sweetness* to such; and did not, at one time or other, make them feel that He is no such fond Lover of Men, but that He knows how to be as Angry as Complaisant, and (if I may *here*, with reverence, use his great Word) *Good Humour'd*.

But that there can be no such thing as *Anger*, and the like, in the Deity, he assures us, *Pag. 60.* *One would think*, saith he, *it were easy to understand, that Provocation and Offence, Anger, Revenge, Jealousie in Point of Honour or Power, Love of Fame, Glory, and the like, belong onely to limited Beings, and are necessarily excluded in (I would rather have said out of) a Being which is*

*perfect and universal. But if we have never settled in ourselves any Notion of what is Morally excellent; or if we cannot trust to that Reason which tells us, that nothing but what is so, can have place in the Deity, we can neither trust to any thing that others relate of Him, or that Himself reveals to us.*

There can be nothing truer than this *latter* Period; and the *former* too is as true, if rightly understood. Nor needed he have done more than inserting this Word, *properly speaking*, to make it as unexceptionable as can be.

And therefore nothing is more universally acknowledg'd among all Christians, that are not of the gross Sect of *Anthropomorphites*, or have any tolerable Notion of the Deity, than that, *properly speaking*, there can be no such thing as *Anger*, *Revenge*, *Jealousie*, or the like, in the  
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Divine Nature ; and therefore, wherever such are Attributed to GOD in Holy Scripture, they are no otherwise to be understood, than is his having *Hands*, and *Eyes*, and *Ears*, a *Mouth*, &c. And what is more ordinary than this sort of Figure, in speaking of GOD, in other both new and old Books, or in common Discourse? And *he* knew, as well as any one, that speaking of GOD, as having Humane *Passions*, is always understood, by Persons of any Understanding and Sobriety, as speaking *ἀνθρωπίνως* after the manner of Men, and by way of Accommodation to vulgar Capacities. And therefore by GOD's Anger is meant no more than His perfect Aversion to, and His Will to punish, all Immoralities ; and His *Revenge* signifies nothing else. And His *Jealousie* for His Honour is nothing but His great Concern not to be robb'd of it,

and



and not to have it despis'd and trampled upon by bold Transgressors; and to have [His Majesty revered, the due Reverence of which being absolutely necessary to prevent the World's being drown'd in Wickedness. So that *this* Jealousy is not for *his own sake*, as if He should be a Sufferer by the loss, or diminution of any part of the Glory that is His due, but for the sake of His *Creatures* onely; who must be infinite Sufferers by having a Hand therein.

And whereas GOD is said to design His own *Glory* in all His *Actings*, and this is the Language of *Holy Scripture*, we are to consider that GOD's *Glory* is not a meer consequent of, but the *self-same* thing with, the illustration of His Perfections, which are His *essential* Glory; or the making them more manifest by the exercise of them. GOD's Glorifying Himself is His  
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displaying of His Glorious Perfections, and giving His Creation to feel them in the Glorious Effects of them; or how Glorious He is in His Power, His Goodness, His Righteousness, Holiness, &c. And dare any say, that this is not Worthy of the Divine Nature, when 'tis *self-evident* that 'tis *most* worthy; nay a perfect Contradiction to our *natural* Notion of Deity, to say that He doth not in this most obvious sense, design His own Glory.

And this is a full Answer to what he saith, Pag. 59. *Do's it really deserve Praise to be thus concern'd about it? Is the doing Good for Glory's sake, so divine a thing? or is it not Diviner to do Good, even where it may be thought inglorious, even to the Ungrateful? How comes it then, that what is so divine in us shou'd lose its Character in the Divine Being? And that according as the Deity is represented*  
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to us, he shou'd more resemble the weak, womanish, and impotent part of our Nature, than the generous, manly, and divine? Who can be so unreasonable as not to be perfectly satisfied with the Answer to this I have now given?

And if this Gentleman did not design to put a Slur upon Holy Scripture in the other Paragraph, as well as this, he is as unwary a Writer as ever put Pen to Paper; since he would not be at the pains of that *one* Word, properly speaking, in saying that *Revenge, Anger, Jealousie, &c.* cannot have any place in the Deity; he knowing that these are often ascribed to GOD in Scripture.

And now, I need make no other Remark upon these Words, Pag. 63. but that they are as good as can be, viz. No body trembles to think, that there should be no GOD, but that there should be One. But this would  
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*be otherwise, if Deity were thought as kindly of as Humanity; and we could be perswaded to believe, that if there really is a God, the highest Goodness must of necessity belong to Him, without any of those defects of Passion, those Meannesses and Imperfections which we acknowledge such in ourselves; which, as Good Men, we endeavour all we can to be superior to; and which we find we every day conquer as we grow better.*

*But I will look back to Page 51, where are these Words: We must not onely be in ordinary Good Humour, but in the best of Humours, and in the sweetest, kindest disposition of our Lives, to understand well what true Goodness is, and what those Attributes imply, which we ascribe with such Applause and Honour to the Deity. We shall then be able to see best, whether those Forms of Justice, those Degrees of Punishment, that Temper of*  
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*Resentment, and those Measures of Offence and Indignation, which we vulgarly suppose in God, are suitable to those original Ideas of Goodness, which the same Divine Being, or Nature under Him, has implanted in us; and which we must necessarily presuppose, in order to give Him Praise or Honour in any kind. This, my Lord, is the Security against all Superstition: To remember that there is nothing in God, but what is Godlike; or that He is either not at all, or truly and perfectly Good.*

Now, why would he not here put in a Word of the Divine Goodness, being *such* as takes in perfect Wisdom, Righteousness, and Holiness, which our natural Reason will assure us, would we listen to it, is the most complete and perfect Goodness? And why would he not tell us, since this is most evident, that 'tis *no* Goodness, but the contrary,

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to make no difference betwixt good and bad Men? This being an encouragement to all that is bad, and therefore of the most mischievous Consequence imaginable to those for whom GOD hath such a tender Love, as was just now shewed: And is it not a high Commendation of the Divine Goodness, that 'tis such as never fails to shew Mercy in all Compassionable Cases; on all those Sinners who persist not in despising it, and are led to Repentance by it? O how many more wonderful Expressions of Divine Goodness to sinful Men, may here be added; and especially those which our Saviour's Gospel acquaints us with! And, after all, 'tis nothing but the dear Love Men have for their Lusts, let them harangue it as plausibly as they will, upon the Topick of Divine Goodness, that can make them think *that* Goodness to be short of Divine which  
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can admit of Severity: or that an infinitely Good Being cannot *Will* to inflict Punishments upon Impenitent Sinners, proportionable to the more or less heinousness of their Crimes; cannot find in his Heart to do it. This is not to be thought without Thinking at the same time, that God has such a Fondness for the *Persons* of Sinners, as makes Him bear no Ill-Will to their Sins; or as not to *see* Sin in them: As the *Antinomians* say, He sees none in His *Elect* People.

And now am I come to the *last* part of the Task I have set myself, namely, to reflect upon what he offers upon the intricate Argument of *Enthusiasm*: Which, he saith, *Pag. 80. is a matter of nice Judgment, and the hardest thing in the World to know fully and distinctly.* And he gives an undeniable Proof of it in that, by all the Pains so

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Exalted a *Genius* has been at about it, we are left as Ignorant as we were before: Our *Fancies* are onely gratified, but our *Understandings* not at all improv'd. He onely gives us the *Etymology* of the Word, which all who have medled with it have done, and, in general, distinguish'd it from *Divine Inspiration*; making onely *this* distinction, that *this* is a *real feeling of the Divine Presence*, and *Enthusiasm* a *false one*. But, as to the *Passion* these two raise, he saith *it is much alike*; and, for any thing of difference *he* discovers, 'tis the very same. For, proceeds he, *when the Mind is taken up in Vision, and fixeth its view either on any real Object, or mere Spectre of Divinity; when it sees, or thinks it sees, any thing prodigious, and more than human, its Horror, Delight, Confusion, Fear, Admiration, or whatever Passion belongs to it, or is uppermost on*

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*this occasion, will have something vast, immane, and (as Painters say) beyond Life.*

And what can we gather more from *this*, than that surely our Gentleman is *himself*, or has been, in his Time, an Enthusiast? And hath *felt* what Pranks are play'd by Enthusiasm within the Souls of Men; or he would hardly be able to talk thus *sensibly* of the Matter, and with such Assurance.

I who know not that I have any *dash* of Enthusiasm, am satisfi'd with a much less Elaborate Account of it, *viz.* That it may be, in short, wholly resolved into Brains well heated with Thoughts; which, according to Mens very different *Make*, and the *Things* thought on, must needs be more or less intense and fixed, and the Brains subject to be *over-heated*, more or less; and especially in those in whom the *Melancholick* Humour is pre-



predominant in a higher or a lower degree. The onely Fault I can spy in *this* Account is, that 'tis too simple for Men of Wit and Fancy. This gives a *Mechanical* Account of those strange Commotions he has describ'd. But I know not why *this* should be call'd by the obscure Greek Name *Enthusiasm*, rather than by our own plain *English* one *Distraction*, in some degree or other. And as for those *nervous* Maladies which commonly accompany this disorder of the Brain, I need not say they as naturally proceed from thence as does Heat from Fire.

After a few Lines he *thus* goes on: *Something there will be of Extravagance and Fury, when the Ideas or Images received are too big for the narrow Human Vessel to contain.* And this is no more than is contain'd in the general Account now given of it in plain *English*.

By the way, Dr. More's *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* is too deeply Philosophical to do more than give a pleasant Entertainment, to such as affect to be curious Pryers into Nature's most hidden Recesses.

He next saith, That *Inspiration* may be justly call'd Divine *Enthusiasm*, for the Word itself signifies Divine Presence. And he tells us, that it was made use of by the Philosopher whom the earliest Christian Fathers call'd Divine, to express whatsoever was Divine in Humane Passions; and that This was the Spirit he allotted to Statesmen, Poets, Orators, Musicians, and even Philosophers themselves. Nor can we, of our own accord, forbear ascribing to a noble *Enthusiasm*, whatsoever is greatly perform'd in any of these ways. And yet, for all this, he, Pag. 74. calls *Enthusiasm* in general a *Distemper*; as mighty an Opinion  
as

as the Divine *Plato* had of it, and tho' we *all* must necessarily be of his Mind.

It follows, *So that we all of us know something of this Principle.* He means, sure, all of us that are *great Performers in any of those ways*, not all in *general*.

And he might have taken in *Cicero*, as Divine a Man, I think, as *Plato* himself, who saith, *Nemo Vir Magnus sine aliquo Afflatu Divino unquam fuit.* Tho', I confess, 'tis plain *he* there meant by *Vir Magnus*, an excellently *Wise Man*; and by *Wise* too, a *Good Man*. So this was no *Rodomontade* upon *Divine Inspiration* or *Enthusiasm*, like that of *Plato*, which he has expressed so great a liking of.

But besides his *Heroine*, *States-Mans*, *Poetical*, *Oratorical*, *Musical*, and *Philosophical* *Enthusiasms*, to which he adds elsewhere the *Furious*



one too, he tells us, Page 81. of an *Atheistical Enthusiasm*, which, I suppose, is no *Divine Inspiration*, nor taken so to be by the *Atheist*. He there saith, *Atheism itself is not exempt from it*: For, as some have well Remark'd, there have been *Atheistical Enthusiasts*. Who those some are my Reading can't inform me; but, whosoever they are, you see he well likes this Remark of theirs. And a Remark of mine may not here do amiss, viz. That speaking here of *Atheistical Enthusiasm*, he saith immediately, that *Enthusiasm* (in general that is) is a *false feeling of the Divine Presence*; so that the *Enthusiastical Atheist*, tho' he does not really feel the *Divine Presence*, yet he *thinks* he does, or he could not have a *false feeling* of it. I am sure I shall be impertinent if I add more Words to *this*, than *Risum teneatis* ----- But this by the bye. And

And now, I think, we must believe what I just now told you he saith, *viz. That Enthusiasm is a matter of nice Judgment, and the hardest thing in the World to know fully and distinctly.* Indeed he has done what lies in *him*, to make *me*, at least, think it the hardest thing in the World to know it *at all*.

Now he having call'd Enthusiasm a *Distemper*, 'tis worth while next to consider how Men happen to be seized with it; and here he gives us wonderful Satisfaction. He shews, *Pag. 69.* that 'tis *Infectious, and a very Catching Disease.* But, I think, he should have told us, at least more plainly than he hath done to *my* Capacity, how *those* from whom the Infection is taken, came to have the Disease *themselves*. He may say *they* had it too by Infection. But will he say then, that to find the *first* Infection you must run

back, back in *infinitum*? This would be to the purpose indeed!

Now he gives Account of this Infection *thus*, *The Combustible Matters lie prepar'd within, and ready to take fire at a Spark; but chiefly in a Multitude seiz'd with that Spirit.* How the *individuals* of this Multitude come to be seiz'd with it, he saith *not*, but how this Multitude infects others, he gives a very plain Account in *these* words, *No wonder if the Blaze arises so of a sudden, when innumerable Eyes glow with the Passion, and heaving Breasts are labouring with Inspiration: When not the Aspect onely, but the very Breath and Exhalations of Men are Infectious, and the inspiring Disease imparts itself by insensible Transpiration.*

The *Sense* of all this is composed of such fine and subtle Particles, that it went off, while I was looking for it, by the same *insensible Transpiration.*

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*spiration*, And is it not somewhat odd, that when he saith *particular* Enthusiasts are infected easily by a Multitude of them, he should not think of informing us how the Multitude should come to be Infected; which, one would imagine, is much *more* difficult to be accounted for: At least, if infected *altogether*, and not one by one at different times, till they become a Multitude. And if so, he might have spar'd the once mentioning a *multitude* in the Case: But *then* there would have been no occasion for that very *original* (as I may well call it) of a highflown Fancy.

And now I come to the most important Enquiry of all, *viz.* How we may *distinguish* between *Inspirations*; between that which proceeds from a good Spirit, and that which doth *not*. He saith, *Pag. 81.* That *Divine Inspiration, by its outward Marks*

*Marks, can't be easily distinguish'd from Atheistical itself. And (as we have seen already) he saith, in the next Words, That the Passion the real feeling the Divine Presence raiseth, is much alike with that which is raised by the false one. So that these two are not onely hard to be distinguish'd by their outward Effects, but also by their inward.*

Sure he will not here leave us quite in the dark, he cannot be so unkind. No, by no means, for *Pag. 83. he gives us a Rule to judg of the Spirits by. He saith, That to judg of the Spirits, whether they are of God, we must first judge our own Spirit, whether it be of Reason and sound Sense; whether it be fit to judg at all by being Sedate, Cool, and Impartial; free from every-byassing Passion, every giddy Vapour, or melancholy Fume. This is the first Knowledge, and previous Judgment;*

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to understand ourselves, and know what Spirit we are of. Afterwards we may judg the Spirit in others, consider what their Personal Merit is, and prove the Validity of their Testimony by the Solidity of their Brain. And, believe me, *this* is Work enough. And 'tis pity if, after all, it proves lost Labour, as I doubt it will. For, I much question, whether their Personal Merit, and the Solidity of their Brain together, be sufficient to prove the Validity of their Testimony, except concerning Matters of *Fact*, of which they profess to have been Eye-witnesses; not the Testimony they give to their own being Divinely Inspir'd.

But, indeed, he is so well aware of the *fallibleness* of the Means he prescribes, for both the knowing of our own Spirits, and the Spirits of others, that the best he saith of them is, *That by this means we may,*  
or



or may possibly, prepare ourselves with some *Antidote against Enthusiasm*, not an effectual Antidote. So that at last here is but cold Comfort. And he ushers all this in *thus*, To know it, (*viz. the principle of Enthusiasm*) as we should do, and discern it in its several kinds, both in ourselves and others; this is the great Work, and by this means alone we can hope to avoid Delusion. And I doubt then there is not one in a Thousand that is sufficient for it, and so may hope to avoid Delusion, except we were better enabled to know Enthusiasm as we should do, and better instructed in its several kinds, in ourselves and others, than we are by this Gentleman.

But he gives *Good Humour'd* People comfort after all, in telling us, That *preparing ourselves with some Antidote against Enthusiasm*, is best performed by keeping to *Good Humour*.

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But what shall *they* do, who have *no* Good Humour to *keep to*? He should have done well to tell them, how they may come by some, instead of *lessening* theirs who have a pretty good Stock of it: which I fear he may endanger, by sending *that* to the *Press*, which might better not have gone farther than into his Lord's *Pocket*; which he seem'd, at first, very indifferent whether it did or no.

But I am perswaded, that without all this *ado*, we may know real Divine Inspirations from mere Pretensions, if we please, and would but sincerely set about it. Whosoever will so do, may quickly be satisfied, that the onely course to be taken is considering what *rational* Evidence appears of their not being deluded, nor Impostors, who profess to come upon God's Errand, and to be Inspir'd by His Spirit. And a very little

little Thinking will put it out of doubt, that our Minds can be rationally satisfi'd about this Matter, onely by enquiring what *Credentials* these pretended Ambassadors bring with them. Now nothing is more evident, than that 'tis necessary these should demonstrate their being divinely Inspir'd, by *first* delivering nothing in GOD's Name, but what is *God-like*, and *worthy of God*; and *next*, that what they deliver should be confirm'd by *Miracles*, or Works surpassing the Power of mere Natural Causes. I mean, when 'tis *necessary* they should be *known* to be divinely Inspired. Because, if a Person brings no *new* Doctrin, but onely inculcates the *old*, and comes to a very wicked People, and vehemently, in the Name of GOD, excites them to Repentance: these Sinners are oblig'd to hearken to him, and Reform immediately, he pressing



pressing them to nothing but what they knew before was their indispensable Duty ; altho' no Miracle be wrought to assure them of his coming in an immediate and extraordinary manner from GOD.

I the rather take notice of *this*, because we read not of any Miracle wrought by, or in behalf of, several of the Old Prophets, whose Message was onely to Awaken high Offenders to the Consideration of their Ways, and Returning to GOD; and to threaten them with heavy Judgments, which they could not but know they had reason to expect from Divine Vengeance.

But, I say, where it is *necessary*  
a Person should be known to be  
divinely Inspired, that Miracles (in  
which I still include the predicting  
of things not foreknowable in their  
Causes) must needs be wrought to  
confirm Revelations, be they never  
so worthy of GOD. These

These *two* must necessarily go together ; neither of them will do without the other. For I need not say, that a Man may speak as good things as can be, and not be *inspired*: and, on the other hand I say, that he may do *Miracles*, or Works which none are able to distinguish from Miracles, and these not performed by a *good Spirit*.

And he saith, *Pag. 70. I learn from Holy Scripture, that there was the Evil, as well as the Good Spirit of Prophecy.* And if he has learn'd this from Holy Scripture, one would hope he *believes* it. Tho' the Words *foregoing* do more than tempt me to suspect, that he is at best but a *Sceptick*, as to the Ancient Prophets being inspir'd by the Good Spirit, *viz, I am not a Divine good enough to resolv, what Spirit that was which proved so catching among the Ancient Prophets.* You see, Sir,

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Sir, what his *real* Opinion of their Spirit seems to be, by his Word *Catching*. It follows, *that even the profane Saul was taken by it*. But Saul was not more profane, than his Word *Catching*. But we shall not catch *him* at more than taking it for *granted*, tho' it shall never be granted to him, that 'tis unworthy of GOD, ever to give a bad Man Inspirations. And if any Credit may be given to the History of the Old Testament, *Balaam*, as profane a Man as *Saul*, had, upon a most extraordinary Occasion, as Divine Inspirations as any of the Prophets, *whatever* they were.

Now, if *Evil Spirits*, as I hope he will *seriously* acknowledge that such Spirits there *may be*, have Power to inspire Evil things, which I also hope he will not *absolutely* deny, it is every whit as certain, that they have Power (with GOD's

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Permission) to back their Inspirations by Works far exceeding all Human Power. For there are scarcely any Matters of Fact more warranted than *such* by most Authentick Histories; and those *Profane* no less than *Sacred*. What Evidence do the *Lives* of the great *Plutarch* give to *this*! And how many more of the best *Pagan* Historians and Philosophers may be added to *him*. And all Ages have Abounded with Narratives of the unimitable Doings of Evil Spirits. And I could tell him, that our own Country affords innumerable, as well-attested Accounts as can be of them, had I a mind to be Ridicul'd by him, as his *Eminent, Learned, and truly Christian Prelate* was.

But, to proceed, as the Goodness of the Message is no Argument of *his* being Divinely Inspir'd, who brings it without the Attestation of Miracles performed by himself, or in

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in his behalf; so Miracles, be they never so apparently such, are *none* neither, if what is deliver'd be unworthy of such a Wise, Holy, Good Being as God; if any part thereof be in its own nature Evil, or has manifestly an evil tendency, tends plainly to the promoting of any corrupt and naughty Design. This is too evident to need more than the *mentioning*. And therefore the Scripture assures us, that Signs and Wonders, tho' they should be real, and not to be distinguish'd from Miraculous, if design'd to serv wicked Purposes, are to be ascrib'd to wicked Spirits: Such as the *Magicians* who withstood *Moses*, were demonstrated by him to be acted by, although the Works they did seem'd to be no less above the Power of Nature, than *Moses's* Works were; when he shewed the Divinity of *his* Miracles, in at last over-powering

the Magicians, and performing such as they could not imitate.

And therefore the Gentleman should have done well to Instance in *another* kind of Enthusiasm, among his many, *viz.* the *Demoniacal*, the *Possession-Enthusiasm*. Instances of which we have Accounts of in the *Gospels*, and the *Acts of the Apostles*, and of which we have had abundance as plain ones as can be among *ourselves*; tho' those whose Interest it is to disbelieve them, still Ridicule them, while they have not one wise Word to object against them. And this *Demoniacal* Enthusiasm will, with the greatest ease, solve many strange *Phænomena*, which, without it, no body can give Account of: particularly not a few of *those* we are with great assurance told of among the poor Prophets, who have, in this City, made themselves so Famous. One of the  
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strangest of these he mentions, P. 71.  
 as what himself was present at;  
 where, and in the foregoing Page,  
 are these Words, *A Gentleman who*  
*has writ lately in defence of revived*  
*Prophecy, and has since fallen himself*  
*into the Prophetick Extasies, tells us,*  
*that the ancient Prophets had the*  
*Spirit of God upon them under Extas-*  
*sy, with divers strange Gestures of*  
*Body, denominating them Madmen*  
*(or Enthusiasts) as appears evidently,*  
*says he, in the Instances of Balaam,*  
*Saul, David, Ezekiel, Daniel, &c.*  
*And he proceeds to justify this by the*  
*Practice of the Apostolick Times, &c.*  
*But I leav it to him to make the Re-*  
*semblance, as well as he can, between*  
*his own and the Apostolick Way. I*  
*only know that the Symptoms he de-*  
*scribes, and which himself (poor Gen-*  
*tleman) labours under, are as Hea-*  
*thenish as he can possibly pretend them*  
*to be Christian. And when I saw*

him lately under an Agitation (as they call it) uttering Prophecy in a pompous Latin Stile, of which out of his Extasy it seems he is wholly incapable, it brought into my Mind the Latin Poets description of the Sibyl, whose Agonies were so perfectly like these, &c.

'Tho' this *Demoniacal* Enthusiasm may be as intelligible, I think, as any other kind, and I know 'tis every whit as easy to be understood, as the Actings of our own Spirits and Bodies upon each other; and tho' we have vast plenty of Proofs that there *has* been such a thing, and *still* is, yet it is grown very Modish (however it comes to pass) to *seem* at least to disbelieve it: Notwithstanding all I now meet with are at a loss to give any tolerable account any other way, of the most surprising Actions and Passions of many of *these* Prophets, and the

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Extasies and Preachings even of some young Children.

To pronounce them *Impostors*, or wilful Cheats, in personating the Great God as they do in their Warnings, is to pronounce them downright *Atheists*, and to declare ourselves as Uncharitable, as we judge them Impious, considering what their Reputation has generally been, to the time of their pretending to be Divinely Inspir'd. And

*Nemo repente fit turpissimus.*

If I may make any Conjecture concerning the Design of Providence, in permitting such a Spirit of Delusion thus to prevail here at *this* time, I cannot but greatly fear it is intended in just Judgment, for the more hardening of Infidels (who so lamentably now Abound, beyond the Example of former Ages) by a



*Mock-effusion of the Holy Spirit, and an Aping (tho' most wofully) of the Great Day of Pentecost.* Yet were a *Possession* more generally acknowledged in the Case, this Permission may be as *gracious* a Providence for the raising Mens Minds to a greater sense of the *reality* of Invisible Beings; and the Conviction of those whose Unbelief is not incurable.

As to these Peoples being possessed with what is called a *Quoad hoc* Madness, as many would have them to be; how so great a Number should, all of a sudden, be seiz'd with this Disease, who can conceive? Sure Madness has not hitherto been reputed a *Catching* Disease, whatever *Enthusiasm* may be. And could Madness give that Gentleman in his Agitations, a *Pompous Latin Style* of which out of his *Extasies* it seems he is wholly incapable? as we now saw our Gentleman's Words are. And

And there is such Evidence of Another's being inspir'd with the Hebrew Language, as I am not able to withstand. As also of some Cures of Diseases without natural Means; tho' there are some such confidently reported, which I see no sufficient ground to give Credit to. But let those their Cures be never so many, although *Madness* cannot be accountable for them, *Possession* may be, while such a thing as *Witchcraft* and *Magick* remain in the World: Which have not been only believ'd by credulous Fools, but also by the *wisest* Men in all Ages, the incomparably greater Number of the *Wise*; and by very many such from their own *Knowledge*, as well as from most credible Information.

'Tis objected by *themselves* and their Friends, that it being their great Business to call Men to Re-  
pen-

pentance, &c. 'tis impossible the *Evil Spirit* would have any hand therein. But no other Answer needs be given than *those Words* of the Apostle, *We are not Ignorant of his devices.* And we are of nothing more certain, than that *Satan* has by no means more successfully carried on the Advancement of his dark Kingdom, than by *Transforming himself into an Angel of Light.*

But how this Prophetick Spirit has been detected to be nothing less than Divine, is too well known to need my saying one Word about it.

I earnestly pray that those who have suffer'd themselves to be taken in this Snare, to the serving of the Cause which I charitably hope and believ they *detest*, may now at length have their Eyes open'd, and not thus obstinately stand it out against the most shameful Baffles their Prophecies have met with ; and especially



ally those *two* of the 29<sup>th</sup> of last April, and the 25<sup>th</sup> of May.

Now, Sir, to go on with my main Business, As it is no less evident, that *that* cannot be of Divine Inspiration which plainly betrays an *ill* Design, than that God is a perfectly *Pure and Holy* Being; so, on the other hand, we are as certain as that God is *Good*, that those who profess to speak by Divine Inspiration do so *really*, if what they deliver is *wholly* for the promoting of true Goodness, and *throughout fitted* to this End; and (withal) has the Confirmation of incontestable *Miracles*: It being a perfect Contradiction to the *Goodness* of God, to suffer Impostors to bring well-meaning People under a *fatal Necessity* of being deluded, in a Matter of so vast an Importance as *Religion*.

And

And consequently we are as fully assur'd, that *Jesus Christ* and His Apostles were not Impostors, as we are of the Divine Goodness: For whosoever are Acquainted with the History and Doctrin of the Gospel, must necessarily Acknowledg, that its whole Business is to Advance the Interest of Righteousness and Universal Goodness, to Recover the laps'd Creation, and turn this miserably depraved World from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; and that it is throughout most Admirably fitted for the effecting of this Glorious Design; and is confirmed by innumerable Miracles, the Greatest imaginable, and most Apparent. I say, All this cannot but be most heartily Acknowledg'd by such Persons, provided they are not so depraved, as to desire that Christianity may be a Fiction.

And

And there is all the reason in the World to be as throughly perswaded of the Certainty of *these* Matters of *Fact* contain'd in the Gospel (or Books of the New-Testament) as of *any* whatsoever; I will not except *those* of which we are *Eye-witnesses*. For the *wisest* Men believ as undoubtedly upon full and clear *Testimony* as upon *Sensation*. And that sort of Testimony that's call'd *Tradition*, if it be General and Uninterrupted, is such Evidence as leavs no room for doubting. We can no more doubt whether there be such Cities as *Rome* and *Constantinople*, tho' we never saw either, nor ever spake with any that had been there, than we *do* whether there be such a City as *York* or *London*. We can no more question whether there were any such Princes as *Cyrus*, *Alexander*, or *Julius Caesar*; or whether they did the Noble Ex-  
ploits



ploits Recorded of them in the most  
 Authentick Histories; or there were  
 such Philosophers as *Plato, Aristotle,*  
 or *Cicero*, or they wrote such Books  
 as have always past for theirs; I  
 say, we can no more doubt of *these*  
 things, than we *could* were all those  
 Great Men *now* Alive, and our near  
 Neighbours; as many *Ages* as they  
 liv'd from *this*, and at as great a  
*distance* as they were from *hence*.  
 And as to the *Genuineness* of the  
 Books of the *New-Testament*, there's  
 even *greater* Evidence for it, than of  
 any other Ancient Books, as may  
 be most easily shewed.

Nay farther, who will not as se-  
 curely rely upon the Testimony of  
*two* or *three* Men, of very noted  
 Prudence and *Integrity*, solemnly  
 Affirming from their own imme-  
 diate Knowledg, a plain Matter  
 of Fact, as upon the Information  
 of his *Senses*? And will not he be  
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laugh'd at as a conceited, silly Fellow, who would in earnest Object against such Evidence as not Convictive?

Now we have no *stronger* Evidence for any thing said to be done at any distance of *Time* or *Place*, than we have that *there was Born in Judæa, in the Reign of Augustus, a Great Man whose Name was Jesus, that declared He came down from Heaven and was the Son of GOD: That He lived upon Earth above thirty Years: That He Taught the most Holy and Divine Doctrin, and led a most spotless and divine Life: Did innumerable most miraculous Works: That He gave the most excellent Precepts, back'd with the most Glorious Promises to the Observers, and the most dreadful Threats against the Despisers of them: That his Miracles were the greatest Acts of Mercy and Beneficence: That He still went about*  
doing

doing Good both to the Bodies and Souls of Men: That at last He was most barbarously requited by those He had infinitely oblig'd, and suffer'd the most ignominious and cruel death of Crucifixion; and even under the blackest Characters, those of an Impostor, a Traytor, a Blasphemer, and a Conjuror, who perform'd his mighty Works by the Power of the Devil: That He bore his Sufferings with the greatest Patience, and as wonderful Charity towards his implacable Enemies: That, being Buried, He Arose from the dead within three days, as He foretold He would: And that forty days after He Ascended into Heaven; and ten days after that performed his Promise of sending the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles and Disciples. I say, all these things, with Abundance more, of which these are the chief, are as powerfully commended to our Belief, as any



any Facts whatsoever which never could Man suspect the truth of. And the more powerfully, in that *these* have the Testimony or Acknowledgment of Enemies as well as Friends; *one* excepted, *viz.* our Lord's *Resurrection*, which they could not acknowledg without declaring themselfs the Murderers of their long look'd for *Messiah*; and therefore the most shameful Miscreants upon the face of the Earth. And to the Testimony of *Jewish* Infidels, is to be added that of *Pagans*, who lived in the earliest Times, in reference to as much as they were capable of knowing; particularly *Tacitus* and *Suetonius*.

As to those who have given the World Account of our Lord's *Resurrection*, &c. as never did any more merit Belief for their Virtue

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and Integrity, so they testified it as *Eye-witnesses* of his being Risen; and gave many *Infalible Proofs* of it; as *their* discoursing with *him*, and *his* with *them*, eating Meals with Him, &c. And this, at times, for Forty Days together; and at last their seeing Him Ascend up to Heaven. And St. Paul says, He was seen by above *Five Hundred* at once; and after His Ascension, by *himself*, as he was horribly persecuting his Disciples, and so not only made a Convert, but an Apostle, and the most indefatigable Preacher of the Gospel. This most Admirable Story, sufficient *alone* to convince all but *obdurate* Infidels, is *thrice* told at large in the *Acts of the Apostles*: An inestimable Book, and carrying the most commanding Authority.

And

And these Testifiers of the Resurrection of Jesus, &c. Confirmed their Testimony by publick Miracles, and as mighty ones as ever their Lord Himself wrought; and after intolerable Sufferings for their constant Adhering thereto, sealed it with their Blood.

I need not tell you, Sir, that I have here crowded together but little more than *Minutes* of a good part of the Evidence we have for the Truth of Christianity, of which there is so large a Measure, as to be *pressed down, shaken together, and running over.* But no more could be expected from me, since now I am to be consider'd onely as a *Remarker* upon this Gentleman's Letter.

And *well* might I wholly confine myself to the Evidence we have of the truth of the *Gospel*, because *that*



of the Divine Inspiration of *Moses* and the *Old Prophets*, doth stand upon the same Bottom with *this*; and the Old and New Testaments are supports to, and equally Confirmations of, one another.

Now, Sir, what do you think he will say to this Super-Abundant Evidence from *Matters of Fact*, that our Religion could not have its Rise from *Imposture*, nor from *Enthusiasm*? I can tell you, that I more than think what he will say; for I have it from his Pen, Pag. 67. in these Words, *There is a sort of Enthusiasm of second-hand. And when Men find no Commotions in themselves, no pannick that bewitches them, they are apt still, by the Testimony of others, to be imposed on, and led credulously into the Belief of many false Miracles.*

*And*

And this Habit may make them of a very inconstant Faith, easy to be carried away with every Wind of Doctrin; and addicted to every upstart Sect of Superstition. But the knowledg of our Passions in their very Seeds, the measuring well the Growth and Progress of Enthusiasm, and the judging rightly of its natural Force; and what Command it has over our very Senses; may teach us to oppose more successfully those Delusions which come Armed with the specious Pretext of Moral Certainty and Matter of Fact.

'Tis too evident from these last Words, what is driven at in all this. He knows, that 'tis Moral Certainty, which all our Learned Defenders of Christianity still insist upon as the Foundation of our Belief thereof; even as it is of all

other things, of which we have not *ocular* Demonstration; or the Evidence of our own Senses. That it is Evidence from *Moral Certainty* and *Matter of Fact*, which Christianity comes Armed with. And therefore who can imagine, that the Writer of a *Letter*, so design'd as we have seen *this* is, should not have *Christianity* principally in his Eye, among the *Delusions* which come Armed with the *specious Pretext* of *Moral Certainty* and *Matter of Fact*?

Now how should we *oppose* *Delusions* with Success that are thus Armed? 'Tis too plain, that his way of doing it is at least *next* to taking it for granted, before we set about this Work, that they are *Delusions*; and then that *Moral Certainty* and *Matter of Fact* can be at best but  
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*a Specious Pretext.* And that this *Pretext* may not appear too plausibly for us to withstand it, we must be taught to oppose it, with the Delusions that come Armed with it, First, *By the knowledge of our Passions in their very Seeds.* Secondly, *By measuring well the Growth and Progress of Enthusiasm.* Thirdly, *By judging rightly of its natural Force; or of the whole Force it hath.* And Fourthly, *By judging particularly what Command it hath over our very Senses.*

But who is sufficient for *these* things? As I asked *before* when he was up with the *like*, or rather, the *self-same* Instructions. And *now* I answer not *himself*, I'll warrant him, be he never so Notable or Profound a Philosopher. And how much he is acquainted with

the nature of *Enthusiasm* we have seen enough to make a very shrewd guess.

But he knows, it seems, that it hath a Command over our *very Senses*; tho' he may be to seek for the *utmost* extent of the Command it hath.

So that whoever profess, that they have *seen* such or such Miracles, be we never so well assur'd of their *Integrity*, we must be at a loss to be entirely satisfied that their *Senses* were not impos'd upon, because they may be *Enthusiasts* for ought we know; and who knows how *powerful* that Command may be, which *Enthusiasm* hath over the *very Senses*?

And

And as we can never tell certainly, whether *any* present Affirmers of what they have beheld distinctly are wholly free from Enthusiasm; so much less can we, whether those who have told the World, Ages ago, of Miracles they plainly beheld with their own Eyes, were not Enthusiasts. And so farewell to all *Moral Certainty*.

And if our *own* Eyes have witnessed to any miraculous things, we might have been imperceptibly under such a degree of Enthusiasm, as might play Tricks with them, for any help *he* has given us to be assured of the contrary. And all those Objects which we could swear we saw at the nearest distance, *Enthusiasm* may have presented to us as clearly as could  
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*Epicurus* his *Effluvia*, he tells us of, *Pag. 74.*] or his *Aerial Looking-glasses*. And ~~then~~ how little of *Natural Certainty* must be left to us with the no *Moral*!

Now since this Gentleman sets up for one of the greatest of all *Scepticks*, which he has not so little Wit as not to know he does (and he knows best whether he does so in good earnest) I can by no means blame him for owning, at taking his Leav of his Lord, that he hath, in some measure justified *Enthusiasm*, unless it be for owning too little. For, were I as he, I would not so mince it as to say, *I justify it in some measure*; I would highly Applaud it, and value it even above the thing call'd *Reason*: For, *this* I should be sensible can never stand me in the least stead  
where

where I have the greatest need of it, without Epicurus's Hypothesis, of a good stock of Visionary Spirit (or Enthusiasm) originally in Human Nature, of which that excellent Philosopher made great Earnings; and not much less than of his Fortuitous Concourse and Fumblement of Atoms. This most Admirable Doctrin of Enthusiasm will help out my Blockish Reason at the deadeft Lifts; it will solv a thousand Phenomena, which without it still make a perfect Fool of me. And am I *just* to it then, while I onely, in some measure, justify Enthusiasm? It is a poor business barely to *justify* Enthusiasm, but a poorer to justify it in *some measure*.

I confess to you, Sir, that *now* this Gentleman has given some shock (tho' this is not the first) to my

my Good Humour. But, I thank him, the very next Page before sets it, in the twinkling of an Eye, to rights again. These are the Words, It is not the same with Goodness as with other Qualities, which we may understand very well, and yet not possess. We may have an excellent Ear in Musick, without being able to perform in any kind. We may judg well of Poetry, without being Poets, or possessing the least of a Poetick Vein. But we can have no tolerable Notion of Goodness, without being tolerably Good. So that if the Praise of a Divine Being be so great a part of His Worship, we shou'd, methinks, learn Goodness, were it for nothing else but that we may learn to Praise: For the praise of Goodness from an unsound hollow Heart, must certainly make the greatest dissonance in the World.



*O se sic omnia ! Quando bene Ne-  
mo melius.* Good Humour Com-  
mands me to stop *here*, and to put  
a Full-Point too instead of an, &c.  
Who would believe the *same* Hand  
could have written both this and  
the following Paragraph, at one run  
of the Pen especially? And you will  
say the like of *many other*, which  
one would wonder to find in the  
same Letter, who is not sagacious  
enough to guess at the *Design* of  
such a Mixture. As for *my Design*  
in these *Remarks*, I know you do  
*more* than Guess at it : And I hope  
'twill, with all like yourself, make  
Amends for the many Defects they  
may well observe in them; who am,

S I R,

*Your most Faithful and  
Affectionate Servant.*